



MULTIPLIERS | DEALING WITH DIMINISHERS

In a Multiplier culture, managers actively bring out the best ideas and full intelligence their employees. However, employees can help shape this culture both by offering their full contribution and responding to diminishing behavior in the most effective ways. The following strategies can help employees maximize their own contribution while minimizing the reductive effect of diminishing leaders.

LEVEL 1: DEFENSES AGAINST THE DARK ARTS OF DIMINISHING MANAGERS

- 1. TURN DOWN THE VOLUME:** Decrease the volume of diminishing messages and increase the volume of other, more enabling, voices—your own, as well as those of supportive leaders and colleagues.
- 2. STRENGTHEN OTHER CONNECTIONS:** If you can't get inside the Diminisher's trust circle, build other circles of influence by increasing your connections with different people and work.
- 3. RETREAT AND REGROUP:** Instead of trying to diffuse a Diminisher on the spot, gracefully retreat and regroup. Acknowledge that they've given you ideas to consider and ask to meet again.
- 4. SEND THE RIGHT SIGNALS:** You can earn more space by determining what is important to the Diminisher and then sending signals that it is also important to you.
- 5. ASSERT YOUR CAPABILITY:** Sometimes you need to tell an overly helpful manager or colleague that you don't need help. Let them know what you are prepared to do (and then be sure to do it).
- 6. ASK FOR PERFORMANCE INTEL:** When a Diminisher becomes immediately prescriptive, ask them to back up and provide more context and direction so that you can hit the right target.
- 7. SHOP FOR A NEW BOSS:** If the only way out is to quit, don't just swap one bad manager for another. Instead of simply searching for a new job, shop for a Multiplier boss (see shopping guide on page 338 of *Multipliers V2*).

LEVEL 2: MULTIPLYING UP (BRINGING OUT THE BEST IN YOUR BOSS)

- 1. EXPLOIT YOUR BOSS' STRENGTHS:** Instead of trying to change your boss, focus on trying to better utilize his or her knowledge and skills in service of the work you're leading.
- 2. GIVE THEM A USER'S GUIDE:** You don't need to wait until your higher-ups discover your true brilliance; you can be proactive by simply telling people what you are good at and how you can be best used.
- 3. LISTEN TO LEARN:** Instead of dismissing a Diminisher's criticism, figure out what this person can teach you and then let them know what insights you gained from them.
- 4. ADMIT YOUR MISTAKES:** Instead of hiding your misdeeds (which typically invites greater levels of micromanaging), own your mistake, communicate what you learned, and earn the space you need to get it right the next time.
- 5. SIGN UP FOR A STRETCH:** Just because your boss hasn't asked you to take on a new challenge doesn't mean you can't volunteer. Send signals that you are ready to tackle a challenge that is a size too big.
- 6. INVITE THEM TO THE PARTY:** Instead of keeping the Diminisher out of your business, try bringing them in and steering their contribution to where it is most valuable (or perhaps just least diminishing).